

to the podium. "He's a poet?" she whispered like someone getting a deal. "He's not wearing a tie so he must be," I answered. I probably could've done without the look she gave me. Zepeda was pretty good. he read his "John" poems and ended with a sorrowful story about a reservation Indian who'd been shafted by himself and life. next, Locklin lumbered up, gray and gutted, scoping out the audience. "He's a poet?" she asked, looking short-changed. "Do you see a tie?" she rolled her eyes for an answer. Locklin was also good. his poems were funny but shadowed with that everyday sadness. after the applause, I asked, "Would you like a glass of wine?" with her finger pointed at my chest, she informed me, "No one here is wearing a damned tie but you." "That should tell you something," I suggested ....

-- Robert Underwood

Redlands CA

INCIDENT AT 4 A.M.

4 naked people  
stood cluttered around the kitchen table  
in various awkward postures

somehow discussing art

THE MAN WHO JUMPED  
BEYOND HIS TIME

left the rooftop  
too suddenly  
and died  
without ever learning  
why

SHE WANTS YOU READY

this girl  
wants you ready  
whenever she needs you

but when you need her  
she often has a headache  
her period  
or a juicy argument  
on the tip of her tongue